There's a Job in Your Future!

Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab) works with tomorrow's workforce today by helping students with disabilities prepare for life after graduation. It is the work that Voc Rehab does with students, schools, and employers that delivers the message to students: There's a job in vour future!®

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Voc

are

Rehab

Transition

Specialists

assigned

to work

schools

all across

the state.

no cost to

students

for these

services.

There is

with

Vocational Rehabilitation is a federal and state funded agency within the Nebraska Department of Education. The agency provides an employment program for people with disabilities, helping individuals make career plans, learn job skills, and get and keep a job. The goal is to prepare people for jobs where they can make a living wage and receive employer benefits.

What is the role of Voc Rehab in transition planning?

The role of Voc Rehab's transition program is that of planning and helping students to identify appropriate post-school goals and needed supports. Involvement with Voc Rehab can begin as early as age 14. Under the transition program, Voc Rehab staff may:

- Provide outreach and transition information to students and parents;
- •Help guide students toward appropriate employment goals;
- Consult with educators on individual students; and
- Collaborate with schools to provide opportunities for students to learn from employers.

Who is eligible?

Students with a disability who have an Individual Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan may be eligible to participate in Voc Rehab services while still in school. Voc Rehab staff will work with the student and family to determine eligibility for specific programs.

How does a student get started?

Voc Rehab Transition Specialists are assigned to work with schools all across the state. There is no cost to students for these services.

Special educators, guidance counselors, school nurses, administrators, and regular educators may refer students to the Voc Rehab Specialist in their area. Participation in the Voc Rehab transition program should be discussed with the student and their family at an IEP meeting. It is important that all involved understand the scope and nature of services that may be provided.

What might a student expect when participating in the Voc Rehab transition program?

Transition services offered by Voc Rehab include:

Career Exploration: This involves tours of community businesses. career days, job fairs, or visits from employers. These experiences provide students an opportunity to learn about the world of work.

Community Resources: Students and their families may be assisted by Voc Rehab staff in locating resources to provided needed services and supports.

Classroom Interaction: Voc Rehab staff work with groups of students in the classroom to explore issues related to employment. For some students, it may be appropriate to continue working with Voc Rehab after graduation to address their employment needs.

Is there more?

Later in high school and after graduation. students may be eligible for additional vocational services. Examples of these services include: vocational evaluations. career counseling, benefits analysis, college tours and planning for college, on-the-job

training and evaluations. training in job seeking skills, or job

Voc Rehab

Most importantly, Vocational Rehabilitation transition services help ensure that students with disabilities have a job in their future!

placement assistance.

(Note: Contact information for Vocational Rehabilitation may be found on page 4 of this publication.)

A Student's Story

Staying Around...continued

Rvan had the opportunity to explore many different jobs during his years at Burwell High School. Myron Kouba, Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Specialist, said that, through job exploration, Ryan became interested in carpentry. As a result of these work experiences, he found that this was a good match for his mechanical aptitudes. After graduating from high school in 2003, Ryan attended Northeast Community College in Norfolk, where he earned a degree in Building Construction and Construction Management.

> Because he has a learning disability in reading and written expression, Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab) worked with the college to ensure that accommodations were made available for Ryan. Voc Rehab also assisted with a portion of his expenses for training

and tools. During college and after graduation, Ryan gained valuable experience in the industry by working in the field of building and commercial construction. He began his work as a laborer and quickly moved up to a position as field foreman.

The experiences Ryan had in working for others led him to determine that he wanted to start his own business, Klimek Construction, in Burwell.

In an interview for the Burwell Tribune newspaper in September, 2007, Ryan stated that, "I've worked in all aspects of commercial and residential construction, but I hated all the traveling. That was why I decided to start my own business. It took about \$20,000 for start up, and I saved that, so I didn't need to get a loan. Now I just have to work hard to expand my business."

Now, back to the question of why Ryan wanted to return to his hometown to start a business.



In his newspaper interview, he said, "I like it here. I grew up here, I'm comfortable with the people and I felt there was a need for an additional contractor and carpenter in the community. I want to raise a family here." There is even the possibility that Ryan may be hiring someone to work for him in the future who is currently receiving services from Vocational Rehabilitation. All this leads one to believe that Rvan will be staying around!

Focus on Employments

Employers Speak

Who knows better than employers what it takes to be successful on the job? We've asked representatives from Nebraska employers to share their suggestions for success. In this and future issues, we will pass these tips along to you. Check out what they have to say.

- 1.Be dependable! Show up to work every day and be on time.
- 2.Be flexible! Be prepared to shift gears into other projects as they arise. Understand that we work in an ever-changing environment and have to be ready to deal with change as it comes.
- 3. Since none of us are perfect, try and take constructive criticism in stride. Try not to become defensive. We are going to make mistakes; try and look at those mistakes as a learning experience.

- 4. Never stop learning. None of us are capable of knowing everything; strive to learn something new every day.
- 5. Think outside of the box! Since our society changes constantly, try to look at better ways to achieve certain goals. Try to make things better!

Mark Moravec Director of Human Resources Chief Industries, Inc.



Why Nebraska?...continued

For More Information:

Contact the State

Vocational

Another plus is the fact that Nebraska's unemployment rate remains below the national average. According to the Nebraska Department of Labor, November 2007 statistics show that the rate in Nebraska was 3.1%. in comparison to the U.S. rate of 4.7%. This is good news for you as you begin your job search!

If, like Ryan, you wish to start your

Rehabilitation own business, there are also many Office in Lincoln at opportunities for you in Nebraska. 1-402-471-3644 There are over 24 million small or toll free at 1-877-637-3422. businesses across the United States. Self-employment is often an You may obtain option that appeals to people with information on the disabilities. This may provide you Voc Rehab Service Office in your area with the opportunity to work by calling these from home, control your work numbers or schedule, or control your work accessing the environment. The possibilities are Service Office listing on the web many, but requires a sound at: http://www. business plan in order to be vocrehab.state.ne. successful. Important information us/vr/office.html

to get you started may be found

at the Nebraska Department of Economic Development website at: http://www.neded.org/ or by calling toll free at 800-426-6505.

As you plan for your future, the question to ask yourself may not be, "Why Nebraska?" but rather, "Why not Nebraska?"

About this Publication

This publication, produced by Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, is intended for students with disabilities and their families. The next issue, Volume #27, is scheduled for distribution in May, 2008.

Please contact us if you:

- Would like additional copies of this publication.
- Have questions or would like more details about any of the information contained in this issue.
- Have a success story you'd like to share with us.
- Have suggestions for topics for future issues.
- Wish to be removed from the mailing list for this publication.

To view previous issues of this or other Vocational Rehabilitation publications, or to receive a free subscription to these publications, go to: http://www.vocrehab.state. ne.us/vr/newsstand.htm. You may also contact the Vocational Rehabilitation State Office toll free at 1-877-NE-REHAB (1-877-637-3422) to receive these publications.

Additional Resources

If you have questions or concerns about services from Vocational Rehabilitation or are looking for additional disability resources. contact the Hotline for Disability Services/Client Assistance Program at 1-800-742-7594 or in Lincoln at 402-471-0801 or e-mail victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov

Photos courtesy of Misty DeLashmutt, The Burwell Tribune, 2007

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P.O. Box 94987 State of Nebraska Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation

Quality Employment Solutions®



A Student's Story

There's A lob

In Your Future!®

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

STAYING AROUND

It is a fact that young adults do not often return to live and work in their small, rural communities after high school graduation. In many cases, if they do choose to return, it may be to join an already established family business. The community of Burwell, located in the Sandhills of Nebraska with a population of just over 1,000 residents, is no exception to this trend. Figures released from the 2007 Census Bureau indicate that the median age in the county is 47 years. It is clear that young adults do not often choose to stay around. So, why would 24 year old Ryan Klimek choose to buck this trend and return home

after college to

start his own

(Continued page 3)

business?



Rvan Klimek's story is that of a voung person who chose to stay in his hometown to start his own business after completing college. He had many good personal and professional reasons for this decision, including the facts that he feels comfortable there and that he recognized a good opportunity for employment.

Making It Work

Much attention has been drawn to the exodus of Nebraska students after graduation, from their hometowns and the state. So, why might you, as a young adult with a disability, choose to remain in your hometown or state when deciding where to settle down?

> First and foremost may be the fact that, as in Ryan's situation, this is where you feel most comfortable. You are likely to have a support system of friends and family in place to assist you with daily life.

You may also be linked with services, such as those provided by Vocational Rehabilitation, to assist you in getting established in the adult world. While it may sound like a grand adventure to move away, the reality may be that you need a safety net (at least temporarily) while you establish yourself in the adult world. This certainly doesn't mean you have to stay here forever! This may simply be a stepping stone.

There are many good reasons to live in Nebraska. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development points out that, "Nebraska is truly in the middle of it all, offering an array of advantages that make exploring, living, working and doing business here a wonderful and rewarding experience. Exceptional quality of life, clean air, excellent educational opportunities, vast recreation, and safe environment, as well as unmatched work ethic. business-friendly atmosphere, and lower-overall cost of living make Nebraska a dynamic location." (Continued page 4)

Ryan Klimek

Lincoln, Nebraska 68509



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